AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** claims 21, 30, and 35 as shown below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A search service system comprising:

at least one memory having program instructions and databases, the databases including:

a category classification database including at least one representative category associated with one or more predetermined keyword groups, each of the predetermined keyword groups including one or more representative keywords and other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords;

a keyword database including at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keywords or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords, each of the representative keywords representing the other keywords associated with the representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

means for receiving a selection of a representative category associated with a predetermined keyword group from a manager wherein the selection is made to reflect current societal interest by the manager;

2

means for associating a representative keyword included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, with a second keyword group associated with a second representative category based on the selection of the manager;

means for receiving a search request from a user terminal through a communication network, the search request including a search keyword;

a first search unit for searching the category classification database for a representative category associated with the first keyword group including the search keyword, the first search unit determining the second keyword group related to the first keyword group by referring to the category classification database, wherein the second keyword group including the first keyword group;

a second search unit for searching the keyword database for the second keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keywords or other keywords included in the second keyword group;

an input order computing unit for computing input order of keywords included in the first keyword group by using; the second keyword group;

means for providing the user terminal with information showing popularity of keywords together with keyword search results so that a display of the user terminal displays the information showing popularity together with the keyword search results, the information showing popularity being related to the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective number of searches made using the respective representative keywords or other keywords included in the second keyword group; and

means for updating the data indicative of a number of searches made using a representative keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords of the second keyword group in response to the search request from the user terminal.

wherein the means for the updating the data adds a number of searches made using keywords represented by a first representative keyword to a number of searches made using the first representative keyword, where the first representative keyword and said keywords convey a same or similar meaning.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 2 1, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 2 1, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 2 1, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

25-29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) A search service method comprising the steps of:

maintaining at least one representative category associated with one or more predetermined keyword groups in a category classification database, each of the predetermined

4

keyword groups including one or more representative keywords and other keywords associated

with the respective representative keywords;

upon receipt of instructions from a manager wherein a selection is made to reflect

current societal interest by the manager, associating a representative keyword included in a first

keyword group associated with a first representative category, with a second keyword group

associated with a second representative category based on the selection of the manager to

reflect current societal interest;

maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number

of searches made using one or more representative keyword or other keywords associated with

the respective representative keywords, in a keyword database, each of the representative

keywords representing the other keywords associated with the respective representative

keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request from a user terminal through a communication network, the

search request including a search keyword;

searching the category classification database with a first search unit for a

representative category associated with [[a]] the first keyword group including the search

keyword, the first search unit determines the second keyword group related to the first keyword

group by referring to the category classification database, wherein the second keyword group

includes the first keyword group;

searching the keyword database with a second search unit for [[a]]the second keyword

group associated with the searched representative category and data indicative of a number of

searches made using one or more representative keywords or other keywords associated with

the respective representative keywords included in the searched second keyword group;

providing the user terminal with information showing popularity of keywords together with

keyword search results so that a display of the user terminal displays the information showing

popularity together with the keyword search results, the information showing popularity being

related to the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective

number of searches made using the respective representative keywords or other keywords

~~associated with the respective representative keywords~~ included in the <u>second</u>~~searched~~

keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using a representative

keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords <u>of the second keyword</u>

<u>group</u>~~associated with the representative keyword~~ in response to the search request from the

user<u> terminal,</u>

<u>wherein the updating the data adds a number of searches made using keywords</u>

<u>represented by a first representative keyword to a number of searches made using the first</u>

<u>representative keyword, where the first representative keyword and said keywords convey a</u>

<u>same or similar meaning</u>.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing

popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least one keyword group

associated

with the searched representative category.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing

popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one keyword group

associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity of the at least

one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows changes in the popularity of the searched keyword in association with the other keywords of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently Amended) <u>A non-transitory computer-readable medium comprising an executable program which, when executed</u> ~~One or more storage media having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed~~ by one or more processors, ~~causes the one or more processors to perform acts including~~<u>performs the steps of</u>:

    maintaining at least one representative category associated with one or more predetermined keyword groups in a category classification database, each of the predetermined keyword groups including one or more representative keywords and other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords;

    upon receipt of instructions from a manager<u> wherein a selection is made to reflect current societal interest by the manager</u>, associating a representative keyword included in a first keyword group associated with a first representative category, with a second keyword group associated with a second representative category<u> based on the selection of the manager</u> ~~to reflect current societal interest~~;

    maintaining at least one predetermined keyword group and data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keyword or other keywords associated with the respective representative keywords, in a keyword database, each of the representative keywords representing the other keywords associated with the respective representative keyword, which convey a same or similar meaning;

receiving a search request from a user terminal through a communication network, the search request including a search keyword;

searching the category classification database <u>with a first search unit </u>for a representative category associated with the[[a]] <u>first </u>keyword group including the search keyword<u>, the first search unit determines the second keyword group related to the first keyword group by referring to the category classification database, wherein the second keyword group includes the first keyword group</u>;

searching the keyword database <u>with a second search unit </u>for [[a]] <u>the second </u>keyword group ~~associated with the searched representative category and ~~data indicative of a number of searches made using one or more representative keywords or other keywords ~~associated with the respective representative keywords ~~included in the ~~searched~~<u>second</u> keyword group;

providing the user terminal with information showing popularity of keywords together with keyword search results so that a display of the user terminal displays the information showing popularity together with the keyword search results, the information showing popularity being related to the search request based, at least in part, upon the data indicative of the respective number of searches made using the respective representative keywords or other keywords ~~associated with the respective representative keywords ~~included in the <u>second</u>~~searched~~ keyword group; and

updating the data indicative of the number of searches made using a representative keyword corresponding to the search keyword or other keywords <u>of the second keyword group</u>~~associated with the representative keyword~~ in response to the search request from the user<u> terminal,</u>

<u>wherein the updating the data adds a number of searches made using keywords represented by a first representative keyword to a number of searches made using the first</u>

8

representative keyword, where the first representative keyword and said keywords convey a

same or similar meaning.

36. (Previously Presented) The one or more storage media of claim 35, wherein the

information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows popularity ranks of the at least

one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

37. (Previously Presented) The one or more storage media of claim 35, wherein the

information showing popularity of the searched keyword shows a portion of the at least one

keyword group associated with the searched representative category based upon the popularity

of the at least one keyword group associated with the searched representative category.

38. (Canceled)